REDEMPTION.

A

SERMON,

ON

EPHESIANS i. 6.

In whom we have Redemption through his blood.

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No. VI.

EPHESIANS i. 6.

In whom we have Redemption through his blood.

THE word *Redemption* is perhaps the moſt comprehenſive, that our own language, or any other, can afford. Redemption itſelf is certainly the greateſt bleſſing that God can beſtow, or man receive. 'Tis this that ſtrikes the joyful ſtrings of the heavenly harpers. This is the burden of that ever-new ſong, which none but the redeemed can ſing—"Worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain, for thou haſt redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."

The ſalvation of man, under whatever name it is deſcribed, always ſuppoſes his fallen, guilty, ruined, and helpleſs ſtate: nor can we underſtand one word of the goſpel aright, without knowing this. He is dangerouſly diſeaſed; Chriſt is the phyſician, and ſalvation his cure. He is naked: Chriſt covers him with his righteouſneſs. He is famiſhed: Chriſt is his meat and drink. He is in darkneſs: Chriſt is his light. He ſtands at the bar, accuſed, and ready to be condemned: Chriſt appears as his ſurety, and pleads his righteouſneſs for his juſtification. So, here in the text. Man is in bondage: Chriſt pays the ranſom, and procures his diſcharge.

Come then, my friends, and let us attend to this great ſubject; and remember, that we are fixing our minds on the ſame delightful theme that engages the hearts and harps of glorified ſaints; and which will employ

employ our grateful tongues to all eternity, if we are found among the ranſomed of the Lord.

Redemption, among men, is the deliverance of perſons out of a ſtate of captivity and bondage, by the arm of power, or, rather, by the payment of a price, for their ranſom. The recovery of God's choſen people from the ruins of the fall, is therefore deſcribed by this term; becauſe they are, by nature, in a wretched ſtate of bondage and ſlavery; from which they could never deliver themſelves; and in which, if not delivered, they muſt periſh for ever. But Chriſt, the Son of God, out of his infinite love and compaſſion, undertook the deliverance; and by paying down a ſufficient price, even his own precious blood as a ranſom, delivered them from ruin, and reſtored them to liberty.

That we may better underſtand this redemption of loſt man; let us conſider—*His captivity—his helpleſſneſs*—and, *the means of his deliverance.*

Conſider, firſt, the ſtate of man as a captive and a ſlave. Captives, among men, are perſons taken in war, and made priſoners. In many caſes, they were uſed very ill; put to ſhame; doomed to hard labour; confined in chains, priſons, or mines; led at the chariot wheels of their conquerors; and ſometimes put to death in a wanton and cruel manner. To this day, the poor blacks are treated as captives, and kept in a ſtate of bondage. Ships are ſent from England, and other countries, to Africa, on purpoſe to get hundreds and thouſands of them for ſlaves. They are ſtolen, or procured under various and wicked pretences; torn from the boſoms of their deareſt relations; forced away from their own country; cloſely ſtowed together in a ſhip; and when brought to the Weſt Indies,

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ſold, like beaſts in a market. They are then doomed to hard labour, and often to cruel uſage; till death puts an end to their miſeries, or their liberty is obtained by paying a ſum of money for it. In ſuch a caſe, a man may be ſaid to be redeemed; and, ceaſing to be a ſlave, he becomes a freeman. This may give us ſome idea of the nature of Redemption. When God made man he made him upright; he made him free; but he ſoon loſt his liberty. Satan attacked him, and prevailed againſt him; and not againſt him only, but againſt all his poſterity. In this ſtate we are born; in this we live; and in this we die and periſh, unleſs the Redemption of Chriſt is applied to our ſouls by the Holy Spirit. You would pity a number of poor captives, if you ſaw them in heavy chains; if you ſaw them ſtript of their cloathing, robbed of their wealth, or ſold like beaſts; if you ſaw them cruelly abuſed and beaten, and pining to death in pain and miſery. Well, this is our own ſtate by nature. We are conquered by Satan; far removed from our original happy condition; deprived of our true riches, the image and favour of God; tied and bound with the chains of our ſins; baſely employed by the devil in the horrid drudgery of our luſts; and, if grace prevent it not, liable to be ſummoned by death into an awful eternity, to receive the wages of our ſin, which is eternal miſery.

From this ſad condition we cannot deliver ourſelves. We have neither the will nor the power. It is the peculiar miſery of ſinful man, that he knows not his miſery. Other captives groan for freedom. Even a bird or a beaſt, deprived of liberty, ſtruggles to get free; but more wretched and ſtupid ſinners deny that they are ſlaves; and fooliſhly boaſt, like the

Jews,

Jews, "that they were never in bondage to any man." They hug their yoke; they love their prison, and fancy music in the rattling of their chains. If any here are in this condition, may God open their eyes, and deliver them from the sad infatuation!

But if a man had a *will* to be free, he has not the *power*. What ransom can he offer? Can he make satisfaction to the injured law of God? Can he render back to his Maker, the glory of which he has robbed him? Or, can he restore to his own soul the image of God, which is lost and spoiled by sin? Can he renew his sinful nature to holiness, or make himself a new creature? No; it is impossible. If the heart of God do not pity; if the hand of God do not help; he must die a slave, and be the eternal companion of his cruel tyrant, and fellow-slaves in the prison of hell.

But blessed be God for Jesus Christ! When there was no eye to pity, no hand to help, his own almighty arm brought salvation. The Son of God, touched with compassion for perishing man, descended from his throne of glory, and visited our wretched abode. Because his people were flesh and blood, "he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage," Heb. ii. 14, 15.

Among the Jews, the right of redemption belonged to the kinsman. Jesus Christ, in order to redeem us, became a man, the kinsman of our nature, "bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh;" "for both he that sanctifieth, and they that are sanctified, are all of

one: for which cauſe he is not aſhamed to call them brethren," Heb. ii. 11.

The redemption of captives is uſually by paying a price, or ranſom. This Chriſt paid, and the price was no leſs than his blood; ſo ſays our text—"In whom we have redemption, through his blood." And ſo St. Peter ſpeaks, 1 Eph. i. 18. "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as ſilver and gold; but with the precious blood of Chriſt"—"not by ſo mean a price as the periſhing riches of this world, ſuch as the ſilver and gold, which are paid for buying poor captives out of bondage, miſery, and ſlavery among men: but it was at no leſs a price than the noble, and invaluably precious blood, ſufferings, and death of the Son of God.

Having taken a *general* view of redemption, let us deſcend to ſome particulars, by which we may better underſtand the ſubject, and be more affected with it. The natural man is a captive of the *Devil*—of the *Fleſh*—of the *World*—of the *Law*—and of the *Grave*. From all theſe, Chriſt delivers his people.

1. We are all, by nature, captives of the *Devil*. This may ſeem to you a hard ſaying, but it is too true; ſee the proof of it, in 2 Tim. ii. 26.—"that they may recover themſelves out of the ſnare of the Devil, who are taken captive by him at his will"—taken alive, as captives of war, to be enſlaved and ruined by the devil. O how dreadful is the power of Satan over wicked men! They are not aware of it, or they would earneſtly pray, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil," or, the evil one. St. John ſays, "The whole world lieth in wickedneſs, or in the wicked one:" (1 John v. 19.) and St. Paul ſays, "He worketh in the children of diſobe-

diſobedience:" (Eph. ii. 2.) So that there is more truth in ſome common expreſſions, uſed by wicked people, than they are aware of; as, when they ſay, "The devil is in you." It is awfully true of all unconverted ſinners. And it deſerves notice, how ſuch people continually diſport with ſuch words as theſe—Hell, and helliſh—Devil, and deviliſh—Damn, and damnation. Surely theſe words ſhew who is their maſter, and what is likely to be their place and portion. May God diſcover the evil of ſuch things to all who practiſe them!

Now, the bleſſed Redeemer came down from heaven to deſtroy the works of the devil. He overcame all his temptations in the wilderneſs; he triumphed over him on the croſs; and when he aſcended into heaven, "he led captivity captive;" conquered the conqueror, and bound the ſtrong one. He ſhewed his power over devils, by caſting them out of the *bodies* of men; and he ſtill ſhews his power, by caſting him out of the *ſouls* of all who believe in him. O that he may ſhew this power among us this moment!

Yes, my friends, if we are redeemed from Satan, we are "redeemed *to God*"—redeemed *to God*, as his peculiar property; for his honour and ſervice; for communion with him now; and for the everlaſting enjoyment of him in glory.

2. We are all, by nature, captives of the *Fleſh*; our minds are fleſhly; "Sin reigns in our mortal bodies; we obey it in the luſts thereof; our members are inſtruments of unrighteouſneſs; we have yielded our members ſervants to uncleanneſs and to iniquity: for his ſervants we are to whom we obey," Rom. vi. 12, &c.

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Is not this true, my friends? Are not ſome, here preſent, yet the ſlaves of ſin; one of drunkenneſs; another of ſwearing; another of fornication; another of lying; another of thieving, or ſome other deadly ſin? Ah, ſirs, "the end of theſe things is death:" "for theſe things ſake cometh the wrath of God upon the children of diſobedience."

But, adored be Jeſus, he came to "ſave us from our ſins;" "that we being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might ſerve him without fear, in holineſs and righteouſneſs before him, all the days of our life." By the power of his Spirit, his people are "born again," and made "new creatures in Chriſt Jeſus, old things paſs away, and all things become new." They are not in the fleſh, but in the Spirit; they walk not according to the fleſh; they are enabled to crucify the old man of ſin, and to put on the new man; and to live, in ſome degree, in that holineſs, without which no man can ſee the Lord.

3. We are all, by nature, captives of the *World*: or, as the ſcripture expreſſes it—"Walk according to the courſe of this world," willingly carried along with the ſtream of ſin; and fooliſhly thinking we ſhall do well, becauſe we do like others; forgetting, that "broad is the road that leadeth to death, and many there be that walk therein;" while the narrow way to life is found by very few. By nature we are conformed to the world; to its fooliſh cuſtoms, maxims, dreſs, and amuſements; and alſo to its dangerous, miſtaken notions of religion. People are afraid to think for themſelves; and take the religion of their neighbours on truſt; without examining, by the word of God, whether it be right or not.

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But our bleſſed Lord, "gave himſelf for our ſins, that he might deliver us from this preſent evil world," from the ſins, ſnares, cuſtoms, and faſhions of the men of this world. St. Peter ſpeaks of being redeemed from "our vain converſation, received by tradition from our fathers." It matters not what we were brought up to; nor what our forefathers lived in: if it was wrong, we muſt forſake it. We muſt confeſs Chriſt before men, or he will deny us before angels; and we ſhall not be aſhamed of the goſpel of Chriſt, if we know it to be the power of God to our own ſalvation; but rather glory in the croſs of Chriſt, by which we are crucified to the world, and the world to us.

4. We are all, as ſinners, captives and priſoners to the broken *Law*, and offended *Juſtice* of God. The law juſtly demands of us, perfect and perpetual obedience. If we fail in one point we are guilty of all; and fall under its fearful curſe. The law demands our obedience, or our blood. If we diſobey but once, our lives are forfeited. We are condemned already; and, if death find us in that ſtate, it ſhuts us up for ever in hell.

But, glory be to the Lamb of God, that he came into the world to ſave ſinners; and as there could be no remiſſion of ſins but by the ſhedding of blood, he freely gave himſelf for us, and died for our ſins, "the juſt for the unjuſt, that he might bring us to God." Thus he gave himſelf "a ranſom" for us; and redeemed us from the curſe of the law, being made a curſe for us," Gal. iii. 13. Hereby, all who believe in him are "delivered from the wrath to come." "There is therefore now no condemnation to them." They have paſſed from death unto life; and "who

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ſhall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that juſtifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Chriſt that died." In conſequence of this, they are intitled to peace of conſcience, even the peace of God that paſſeth all underſtanding.

Finally, We are all, by reaſon of ſin, doomed to *death*, and ſhall ſhortly be priſoners of the *Grave*. This is the houſe appointed for all living; to this dark abode we muſt ſoon remove, and there remain till the great day, when there ſhall be a reſurrection both of the juſt and the unjuſt.

But the glorious Redeemer has ſaid of his people, "I will ranſom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy deſtruction!" Yes, Jeſus is made unto us redemption; namely, "the redemption of the body;" and "the creature itſelf," that is the body, "ſhall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God." "Then ſhall be brought to paſs the ſaying that is written, Death is ſwallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy ſting? O grave, where is thy victory? The ſting of death is ſin, and the ſtrength of ſin is the law: but thanks be to God who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt."

APPLICATION.

And now, my friends, what think you of redemption? Does it appear to you a little, or a great matter? How are your hearts affected with it? Do you know that you are, or once was, in this miſerable bondage? You can never deſire deliverance, nor love

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the deliverer, till you know this. When Iſrael was in Egypt, "they ſighed by reaſon of their bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reaſon of the bondage." Again, when Iſrael was in Babylon, "they ſat down by the rivers and wept; yea, they wept, when they remembered Zion." Depend upon it, if you never ſaw this to be your condition, it is your condition now. If you never ſought redemption, you never partook of it. If you never ſaw any excelleuce and preciouſneſs in Chriſt, you are yet "in the gall of bitterneſs, yet in the bond of iniquity." Be adviſed, when you go home, to retire to ſome ſecret place; and, on your bended knees, implore the bleſſed Redeemer to ſet you free. Say, with the Pſalmiſt, "Draw nigh to my ſoul, and redeem it." Look through the bars of your priſon to heaven. Cry to the Lord in your trouble, and he will ſave you out of your diſtreſſes. Hear him ſaying—"Wilt thou be made free?" He ſtands ready to knock off thy fetters, and ſet thee at liberty. If it was neceſſary for *you* to pay the price of redemption, you might well deſpair! but the price is paid; nothing on your part is wanting but a heart and a hand to receive it. Come then, for all things are ready. "Let Iſrael hope in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption."

And you, who, through grace, have believed to the ſaving of your ſouls, come, and conſider the ſad ſtate you were in; from which nothing could deliver you but the aſtoniſhing ranſom of the Saviour's blood. O ſee the malignity of ſin, in the Redeemer's bloody ſweat in the garden, and in his dreadful pains on the croſs.

Come

Come and meditate on the love of Chriſt, "who loved you, and gave himſelf for you;" and who has, by his Spirit, brought home the redemption to your heart. There was nothing good in you to engage him to do this; for "while we were yet enemies Chriſt died for us." O be thankful for your wonderful deliverance. "O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever. Let the redeemed of the Lord ſay ſo, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy." Had a generous fellow-creature delivered you from Turkiſh ſlavery, or from a Spaniſh inquiſition; how would you expreſs your thanks? O, Sir, would you ſay, I am under inexpreſſible obligations; I have not ſuch another friend in all the world; I ſhall never forget your kindneſs while I live." But no earthly friend could redeem your ſoul from ſin and hell. "O, would to God, (ſaid a holy man) I could cauſe paper and ink to ſpeak the worth and excellency, the high and loud praiſes of our brother Ranſomer! O, the Ranſomer needs not my report; but if he would vouchſafe to take and uſe it, I ſhould be happy if I had an errand to this world, but for ſome few years, to ſpread proclamations of the glory of the Ranſomer, whoſe cloaths were wet and dyed in blood; if even, after that, my ſoul and body ſhould return to their original nothing."

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Thus, my friends, let us think of Chriſt; and thus thinking of him, let us ſhew our love by keeping his his commandments: ever remembering, that "we are not our own, for we are bought with a price; therefore let us glorify God in our body, and in our ſpirit, which are God's."